

# Population Isolation in the Philippine War: A Case Study

A Monograph

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## **Abstract**

Population Isolation in the Philippine War: A Case Study, by MAJ Eric Weyenberg, 49 pages.

This monograph describes population isolation as a measure of pacification during the Philippine War. The US military applied population isolation to achieve the political and military objectives of winning this war. The employment of population isolation took many different forms on the islands of Luzon, Samar, and Marinduque. A discussion covering these areas, with a focus on the leaders, duration, and level of intensity will help in understanding the breadth of population isolation in the Philippines. Slightly over half of the provinces in the Philippines had conflict between the Americans and the *insurrectos*. Areas of concentration occurred in a minority of those provinces. Scholarly works have discussed population isolation during the Philippine War, but none encapsulates the details and the differences of this process in a single literary work.

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## Introduction

In point of time pacification falls between war and peace, between organized resistance and complete acceptance of the dominating power, between disorder and full return to civil order.

—Robert L. Bullard, “Military Pacification”

Poorly documented and largely unstudied, population isolation during the Philippine War remains highly controversial. Concentrating civilians led to much debate during operations in 1901 and 1902. Numerous Americans exposed to standard education in the United States, including those with some exposure to history at higher levels, will not learn about population isolationism in the Philippines.<sup>1</sup> A key textbook in the 1990s and turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century that taught US Army cadets about American military history did not mention this controversial yet effective technique of population isolation that helped bring an end to the fighting.<sup>2</sup> Some collegiate surveys of American history textbooks do not address the concentration of civilians during the Philippine War.<sup>3</sup> Some historical textbooks that do mention population isolation in the Philippine War do not explain substantial reasons for such extreme measures.<sup>4</sup> This analysis will serve as a case study on the application of population isolation during the Philippine War.

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<sup>1</sup> Angel Velasco Shaw and Luis H. Francia, eds., *Vestiges of War: The Philippine-American War and the Aftermath of an Imperial Dream 1899-1999* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), xxiii.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Doughty et al., *American Military History and the Evolution of Western Warfare* (Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company, 1996).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. Maurice Matloff, ed., *American Military History* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1968).

<sup>4</sup> Allan Millett, Peter Maslowski, and William Feis, *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States from 1607 to 2012* (New York: Free Press, 2012); John Shy, “The American Military Experience: History and Learning.” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 1, No. 2 (1971): 217. George Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations since 1776* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Richard Stewart, ed., *American Military History*, vol. 1, *The United States Army and the Forging of a Nation, 1775-1917* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 2004).

## Definition

The definition of population isolation is removing inhabitants of one area from their homes, and resettling them into another civilian center where they might be cared for by a security force that is attempting to safeguard the population from external threats. The security force is responsible for providing for the population in a controlled setting that does not aid the opposing force. Another key component is the removal of the ability for civilians to live outside of the concentration zones, as those areas may resemble a wasteland. The destruction or absence of crops, shelter, and necessary survival components occur during the process of concentration. There are many terms that relate to the above definition, and are used liberally in describing population isolation through numerous textbooks and scholarly works. These terms include: concentration, protected zones, concentration camps, zones of protection, colonies, concentration policy, *reconcentrado* policy, guarded zones, reconcentration camps, forceful measures of pacification, resettlement, protected camps, and concentration zones.<sup>5</sup> Some of these terms carry emotional weight. For instance, the term concentration camps can be closely associated with Nazi death camps. Concentration camps conjure a severely negative image, which betray the intentions of most techniques of population isolation that focuses on relocation due to unsafe conditions. An understanding of the definition will prevent pre-conceived views as to the intended purpose of population isolation.

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<sup>5</sup> Brian Linn, *The Philippine War 1899-1902* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 214-215; James Arnold, *Jungle of Snakes: A Century of Counterinsurgency Warfare from the Philippines to Iraq* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2011), 57; Brian Linn, *The U.S. Army and Counterinsurgency in the Philippine War, 1899-1902* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 27; Thomas Paterson, J. Garry Clifford, and Kenneth Hagan, *American Foreign Relations: A History · To 1920*, vol. 1, 4th ed. (Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company, 1995), 233; Robert Bullard, "Military Pacification." *Journal of the Military Service Institution of the United States* Volume XLVI (January-February 1910), 17; Herring, 328; Millett, Maslowski, and Feis, 279.



## Literature Review

Some textbooks which explain the Philippine War indicate that population isolation was a common practice.<sup>6</sup> Impressions gained from these works convince that this tactic was a first option. These works do a great disservice to the scope and usage of the concentration of civilians during the Philippine War. This case study will illustrate the magnitude of this harsh pacification practice, along with the decisions by military leaders that treated population isolation as an extreme, not routine, measure.

Operational leaders in the US Army, like Bell and Robert L. Bullard, wrote about zones of protection during the war.<sup>7</sup> Their original words are useful in attaining insight of their actions, but limited when discussed today. The few documents written on population isolation in the early 1900s corresponded with the Senate hearings on atrocities committed by the US military in the Philippine War.<sup>8</sup> These hearings, held right after the conflict was over in 1902, curtailed professional literature by military officers. Concluding the Senate hearings, the nation wanted to provide distance from this war, with less controversy.<sup>9</sup> The US Army seemed focused on large unit operations, unlike the recently conducted counter-insurgency in the Philippines.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Paterson, Clifford, and Hagan, *American Foreign Relations*, 233 is an example of this.

<sup>7</sup> Bullard; Robert Ramsey, *A Masterpiece of Counter guerrilla Warfare: BG J. Franklin Bell in the Philippines, 1901-1902. (OP 25)* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2007). Bullard's article is in his own words, while Ramsey's work consolidates Bell's directives (circulars).

<sup>8</sup> James Blount, *The American Occupation of the Philippines, 1898-1912* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1913), 393. Blount's work describes these Senate inquiry hearings, which discussed conditions in the reconcentration camps besides atrocities committed by US forces. Blount discussed the camps with Senator Bacon's elaboration, who described an anonymous letter from an Army officer. A "corpse-carcass stench" wafted into the writer's nostrils as he wrote: "At nightfall clouds of vampire bats softly swirl out on their orgies over the dead".

<sup>9</sup> Brian Linn, *The Echo of Battle: The Army's Way of War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 87.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

Participants in the Philippine War discussed population isolation and its effect on the Filipino people. These reports garnered much attention during the ongoing conflict. This perspective, viewed through the lens of anti-war politicians and participants, fed the opposition against the expansionist aims of the United States. Anti-war individuals had political reasons for opposing the policies of isolation.<sup>11</sup>

Personal descriptions of those that witnessed the zones of protection focus on individual soldiers and marines. These combatants witnessed population isolation with varying views of its success and failure. The Anti-Imperialist League encouraged the publication of letters from soldiers who claimed to set houses on fire and shoot civilians.<sup>12</sup> Viewed by the native Filipino population, concentration camps appear as unnecessary and extremely harsh punishment. In one example of many, extreme charges of hostage taking, rape, and torture from the Filipinos in Candelaria warranted an Army investigation.<sup>13</sup>

Secondary sources address environmental effects of population isolation. Orders to destroy livestock, and the lack of ranchers available, effected the natural environment. The decrease of the carabao cattle herd population changed the predicted environment of the

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<sup>11</sup> Glenn May, *Battle for Batangas: A Philippine province at War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 280-281. A Philadelphia Ledger article and other papers likened Bell to “Butcher” Weyler in Cuba. On January 1902 Bell caught negative press. Written reports were furnished to the senate committee hearings from MAJ Cornelius Gardener, who was the provincial governor of Tayabas. He accused the military establishment of atrocious behavior, unnecessary property destruction, and the use of the water cure. Another written report from Florencio Caedo, a provincial secretary of Batangas, charged that the US occupation aided in the population decrease, with an overall death of 100,000 inhabitants.

<sup>12</sup> Howard Zinn, *A People’s History of the United States* (New York: Harper Collins, 1980), 315.

<sup>13</sup> Reynaldo C. Ileto, “The Philippine-American War: Friendship and Forgetting” in Angel Velasco Shaw and Luis H. Francia, eds., *Vestiges of War: The Philippine-American War and the Aftermath of an Imperial Dream 1899-1999* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 14-15.

Philippines today, and the effects of congregations of personnel, along with depopulation of areas of the Philippines, had detrimental effects throughout the archipelago.<sup>14</sup>

The history of population isolation as a military tactic by Americans traces back to the Civil War.<sup>15</sup> The widespread use of Indian removal practices was another form of population isolation employed prior to the Spanish-American War.<sup>16</sup> The Spanish had *reconcentrado* camps in Cuba, and these camps added to the arguments to get involved in removing the Spanish from Cuba.<sup>17</sup> Concurrent with the Philippine War, the British were practicing population isolation in their Boer War.<sup>18</sup> The use of relocation camps to house Japanese-Americans during WWII was an example of US citizens experiencing harsh pacification measures. During the Vietnam War, the strategic hamlet zones of protection showed a recent use of population isolationism.<sup>19</sup> A contemporary example of this occurred in Bosnia in the 1990s when multi-national troops attempted to secure safe zones to keep warring factions apart.<sup>20</sup> Consideration for population isolation in the last decade involved US controlled Iraqi areas bracketed by checkpoints and concrete barriers. Concentration of civilians was not a unique technique through American or

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<sup>14</sup> May, *Battle for Batangas*, 264, 271-272, 283-284. His examples of these impacts seem balanced.

<sup>15</sup> Andrew Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine 1860-1941* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1998), 37; Arnold, *Jungle of Snakes*, 57.

<sup>16</sup> Brian Aldridge, "Drive them until they drop and then civilize them," (University of New Brunswick, 1993), 10.

<sup>17</sup> Arnold, *Jungle of Snakes*, 57.

<sup>18</sup> Anthony Joes, *Resisting Rebellion: The History and Politics of Counterinsurgency* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2004), 106-107.

<sup>19</sup> Andrew Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine 1-1942- 1976* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2006), 393-396.

<sup>20</sup> Ronald Paris, and Timothy Sisk, *The Dilemmas of Statebuilding: Confronting the Contradictions of Postwar Peace Operations* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 5.

European military past and recent history, and in extreme circumstances involving protecting civilians, this harsh measure is a viable option in the future.<sup>21</sup>

Modern historical accounts of the Philippine War fall into two categories. Numerous secondary source books written in the late 1900s tend to glaze over details of population isolation. Authors bypass civilian concentration details and methods for more sensational accounts of how military officers were villains that ruthlessly killed in their enforcement of an imperialistic American strategy. Stuart Miller and Stanley Karnow are two famous examples of writers or historians who publish this version of history.<sup>22</sup>

Other recent professors who published in the late 1900s delve into population isolation in a more objective manner, like Glenn May and Brian Linn. May highlights the policy of concentration, as applied by General J. Franklin Bell, in Batangas, from 1901 to 1902. A chapter in May's book titled "Concentration and Conquest" stands out as a study of population isolation.<sup>23</sup> Focused on Batangas, May does not consider other examples of concentration. Linn discussed zones of protection sporadically throughout his historical works.<sup>24</sup> Linn presents a clear understanding of the effect of these measures. However, population isolation lacks specific focus and clarity in Linn's works.

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<sup>21</sup> Kalev Sepp, "Resettlement, Regroupment, Reconcentration: Deliberate Government Directed Population Relocation in Support of Counter-Insurgency Operations" (Monograph, US Army Command and General Staff College, 1992), 115.

<sup>22</sup> Stewart Miller, *"Benevolent Assimilation": The American Conquest of the Philippines, 1899-1903* (Westford, MA: Yale University Press, 1982). Stanley Karnow, *In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines* (New York: Random House, 1989).

<sup>23</sup> May, *Battle for Batangas*, 242-269.

<sup>24</sup> Brian Linn, *Guardians of Empire: The U.S. Army and the Pacific, 1902-1940* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), Linn, *Philippine War* and Linn, *Army and Counterinsurgency*. These major works of Linn discuss the Philippine War in full or partial detail, and all three discuss population isolation.

A clear and concise case study of population isolation during the Philippine War, through the lens of a current military view, does not exist. This monograph is an attempt to add to the body of literature on this conflict by analyzing population isolation in the Philippine War, and the positive and negative results of such actions.

What is certain is that employment of population isolation was a tactic that helped achieve the political and military objectives of winning the war. The original tactic of attraction used in 1899 and 1900 failed to yield widespread results, as the US Army could not overcome the shadow government that predated the arrival of the Americans, attained legitimacy during the decline of the Spanish in the Philippines, and continued to exist during the Philippine War.<sup>25</sup> The measures of concentration involved in pacification led to the general ending of resistance against the US Army in the Philippines. These harsh pacification measures were dependent on various regional events and represented a sizable scope of the overall operational area of the Philippine Islands that the US military attempted to control during the war.

This study's focus is to examine how widespread the practice of population isolation was during the Philippine War. First is an explanation of general stages that escalated the regions of the war from conventional to guerilla warfare. This eventually led to the use of population isolation. Then will be a brief analysis of the history of the use of concentration, including how a portion of the Filipino forces used population isolation. An examination of most areas of concentration in the Philippines involves an analysis of various areas of Luzon, followed by techniques employed on the islands near and on Samar, and Marinduque. This study's conclusion will assess the overall impact of population isolation, and note the lack of details available for a clear understanding of the complete situation.

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<sup>25</sup> Robert Ramsey, *Savage Wars of Peace: Case Studies of Pacification in the Philippines, 1900-1902*. OP 24 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2007), 22-25.

## Outline of the Philippine War

For the Filipino independence seekers, two stages of operation were encouraged early on by General Emilio Aguinaldo. He was a key leader in the fight for independence from Spanish and American rule during 1896 to 1901. The organization that Aguinaldo loosely led succeeded against the Spanish in most rural areas. Aguinaldo brought the same techniques against US forces during the Philippine War that started in February of 1899, as the uneasy truce between the local independence seekers and US forces broke down.<sup>26</sup>

First, the *insurrectos* attempted conventional warfare against the US military forces.<sup>27</sup> Conventional warfare failed to account for the disadvantages of the Filipinos. Americans defeated *insurrectos* in most battles as the vastly outnumbered Americans possessed superior weaponry and were better equipped and trained in military operations. On a few occasions, this defeat of military forces was enough to quell the rebellion in some local areas. The trend was for US forces to defeat strong enemy existence (if the *insurrectos* stayed to fight, which was not often), but then to be overcome by extreme heat and exhaustion, restricted terrain, over-extending their logistical lines of communication, and losing the ability to coordinate with higher headquarters or adjacent units to link their tactical actions with any operational goals.<sup>28</sup> In some other regional areas, the rebellion did not have the support of the people, and there was no noteworthy opposition to US rule.

The failure of conventional war hindered the objectives of the Filipinos. Numerous defeats on the battlefield led to the transition to irregular warfare. Guerrilla warfare partially continued as a political statement, especially in the time-frame leading up to the elections of

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<sup>26</sup> Arnold, *Jungle of Snakes*, 17.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 19. The term *insurrectos*, used throughout this paper, means anti-US forces in favor of Filipino independence.

<sup>28</sup> Linn, *Philippine War*, 121.

1900.<sup>29</sup> The Filipino forces would attempt to conduct guerrilla operations from the rural areas and establish shadow governments. This had some local success, but there were obstacles to the success of the *insurrectos*. At least three major difficulties stopped the guerrilla warfare technique.

US forces were able to exploit Filipino diverse cultural groups against each other, and find ways to gain information and destroy armed resistance in the rural provinces by disrupting those rural bases. The major leaders of the independence movement against the US forces were not a cohesive unit, and local animosities and ethnic differences would often get in the way of cooperation against the foreign forces. The US forces eventually became experienced at identifying and exploiting religious sects and cultural differences, and social seams that developed added effective native military aged men to support the US cause and served as important intelligence operatives.<sup>30</sup>

Other times the brutality and retributions that the guerrilla bands enacted on their own people was so severe as to undermine their cause.<sup>31</sup> If local elites bonded too soon with the Americans, they found themselves targeted and potentially killed by the native forces.<sup>32</sup> Public displays of these murders and assassinations meant to convince the population to stay away from

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<sup>29</sup> Birtle, *Counterinsurgency 1860-1941*, 112. The Filipino leaders hoped to harass US forces and encourage the Anti-Imperialists. They were aware of the elections of 1900, and with continued pressure, the *insurrectos*' strategy was to influence the election towards William Jennings Bryan.

<sup>30</sup> Ramsey, *Case Studies*, 49.

<sup>31</sup> Vicente Rafael, "Parricides, Bastards and Counterrevolution: Reflections on the Philippine Centennial" in Angel Velasco Shaw and Luis H. Francia, eds., *Vestiges of War: The Philippine-American War and the Aftermath of an Imperial Dream 1899-1999* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 364. The Filipino people, being highly segmented, committed numerous crimes against each other. One high level example took place between two prominent Filipino leaders. A power struggle between Andres Bonifacio and Aguinaldo over potentially rigged elections ended up in more tension between ethnic groups. The revolutionary government arrested, tried, and executed Bonifacio.

<sup>32</sup> Arnold, *Jungle of Snakes*, 23.

the Americans proved to the countryside that the Americans could not protect them.<sup>33</sup> Instances of Filipinos forming organizations to fight off the *insurrectos* led to bloodshed, and that civil strife added to the disorganization of resistance.<sup>34</sup>

The US Navy made a noteworthy contribution to the Philippine War. Mobility, naval gun support, and the blockade of selected ports contributed to the difficulties of resistance to American objectives. Numerous examples of troop transport with Army/Navy cooperation led to military success in reducing opposition. Separately or in conjunction with Army movement, naval gunfire employed against communities or Aguinaldo's forces succeeded in furthering US regional objectives. The blockade made movement from island to island difficult for the *insurrectos*, which hampered their ability to coordinate forces and form a coherent inter-island campaign strategy.<sup>35</sup> Some of these actions of the US Navy augmented US forces efforts of population isolation.

Naval blockades also aided in causing food deprivation to the guerrilla groups. Coupled with widespread property destruction, US rule benefitted.<sup>36</sup> Food procurement, through the ports and open markets outside of the Philippines was a service the US Government could provide. The control of resources in a one-sided manner weakened resistance, and led to increased capitulation of the *insurrectos* in many areas of the archipelago. In areas that did not accept US rule, food deprivation techniques by the Army and Navy were generally intensified.<sup>37</sup>

Mixed in with a liberal policy of pardon, frequent general amnesty calls, and other incentives, this variety of challenges was too much for the weakened guerrilla groups to

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<sup>33</sup> Arnold, *Jungle of Snakes*, 24. "During 1900 the Americans recorded 350 known assassinations and 442 assaults. The actual numbers were doubtless much higher."

<sup>34</sup> Linn, *Philippine War*, 237, 267- 268.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 131.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 220.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 214.



overcome. In addition, some areas actually asked the US military for protection. Civilians were willing to move into protected zones to stay away from the *insurrectos*.<sup>38</sup> Concurrent with calls for general amnesty, improvement in infrastructure measures were undertaken. Building schools, improving roads, and making port facilities functional helped to win over the local elites and populations in some areas of the Philippines.<sup>39</sup>

In a few locations in the Philippines, after months or years of conflict, the war had generally run its course along the previously mentioned lines of conventional warfare, guerrilla warfare, attraction policies, and brutality to civilians from all combatants. An outlier to all of these patterns was the Muslim dominated Moro region.<sup>40</sup> When the shadow governments were not fully co-opted, and where the elite support for resistance against the US forces were the strongest, then harsher measures of pacification were often undertaken against the Filipino people. Only when Filipino forces were able to encourage or intimidate the local population against supporting the Americans and the local military commanders, then harsher measures like the establishment of civilian camps were adapted in several parts of the Philippines.<sup>41</sup> These measures, based off military leaders with extensive field experience, followed historical trends of

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<sup>38</sup> Linn, *Philippine War*, 215. Local residents suggested concentration.

<sup>39</sup> Stewart, *American Military History*, 358-359.

<sup>40</sup> James R. Arnold, *The Moro War: How America Battled a Muslim Insurgency in the Philippine Jungle, 1902-1913* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2011). Many descriptions exist in what can be defined as a separate conflict, and this work, along with others, will easily capture the differences in these conflicts, with the one continuity that the US forces were the combatants of one side. Where this pattern did not play out was in the Moro inhabited area of the Southern Philippines, including Mindanao and Moro influenced surrounding islands. The conflicts between US forces and the inhabitants will not be discussed in this monograph. Warfare here was fought differently, mainly attributed to cultural influences and the vastly contrasting approaches taken by the US forces in subduing the Moro uprisings that sporadically occurred in the early 1900s during the American occupation of the Philippines. Although there were instances of food deprivation, blockades, and combat patrols, there did not seem to be examples of population isolation, as termed in this monograph, present in the conflicts with the Moros.

<sup>41</sup> Arnold, *Jungle of Snakes*, 67.

civilian concentration prior to the Philippine War. Population isolation supported the general guidance from the political structure in the United States with the aim of ending the war quickly.

### **Population Isolation Prior to the Philippine War: Experience in the US Army**

US Army officers practiced and learned about population isolation techniques for decades prior to the Philippine War. General Orders No. 100, issued during the Civil War, called for appropriate treatment of civilians on the battlefield, with a key clause that allowed for imprisonment of civilians. During the Civil War, the concentration of civilians rarely occurred, while techniques that often accompanied this concentration were widely prevalent. The frontier battles against the Native Americans employed population isolation, which became the foundation for reservations throughout the United States. In Cuba, a rallying cry against Spanish control of the Cubans was the use of concentration camps against the Cuban populations. The British used civilian camps in the Boer Wars, which occurred at the same time as the Philippine War. Army leaders, exposed to these techniques through numerous conflicts and current events over the decades leading to the Philippine War, were not strangers to the concept.

Signed in April of 1863, Francis Lieber's "Instructions for the Government of Armies of the United States in the Field" became General Orders No. 100. Lieber was a German American who wished to "write a little book on the Law and Usages of War, affecting the combatants."<sup>42</sup> The majority of Lieber's Code deals with fair and humane treatment of civilians and combatants, and was translated and used extensively in Europe.<sup>43</sup> The terms of General Orders No. 100 emphasized by military tacticians during time of population concentration are included in Section 155 and 156. Lieber differentiates between loyal and disloyal citizens, and then goes on to

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<sup>42</sup> Richard Hartigan, *Lieber's Code and the Law of War* (Chicago: Precedent, 1983), 2.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

include the ability to “throw the burden of the war” on “the disloyal citizens.”<sup>44</sup> These measures include expelling, transferring, and imprisoning disloyal citizens.<sup>45</sup>

Population concentration during the Civil War in northern Arkansas through the terms of Lieber’s code contributed to ending Confederate guerilla operations.<sup>46</sup> Other aspects of General Orders Number 100 were useful to the United States in the 1860s. Union commanders were able to use Lieber’s Code as justification for actions taken prior to the publication of the document.<sup>47</sup> General Orders No. 100 sanctioned the destruction of civilian property by both belligerents in the Civil War. Destroying areas around civilian populations occurred, since the destruction of civilian property was becoming a common technique in the total war concept that arose in parts of the United States. Less than 40 years after the Civil War, there were a few senior officers that either served in the 1860s or gained tutelage from Civil War veterans. These officers understood the use of Lieber’s Code during the Civil War, and were willing to use it once again to justify harsh measures against the civilians on the archipelago.

Population isolation with the Native Americans started with the exodus of Indian tribes in the 1800s to lands uninhabited by the white man. Native Americans, prohibited to leave their reservations, remained safe on the reservations while destruction occurred outside the reservations. The US Army constantly patrolled with orders that individuals off the civilian camps were hostile.<sup>48</sup> Unlike the Civil War, relocated individuals were not former US citizens, and did not share the same ethnicity as the US Army soldiers. The Native American battles with the United States continued through the late 1800s, and many leaders in the Philippine War were

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<sup>44</sup> Hartigan, *Lieber’s Code*, 71.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Arnold, *Jungle of Snakes*, 57.

<sup>47</sup> Birtle, *Counterinsurgency 1860-1941*, 35.

<sup>48</sup> Aldridge, “civilize them,” 10-11.

former frontier fighters or participated in units that had a history of population isolation as a measure of tactical significance.<sup>49</sup>

Public opinion was a major factor in launching the United States into a war with Spain prior to the Philippine War. One part of that outrage that the citizens of the United States bristled at was the actions in Cuba. Known as the “butcher” Spanish General Valeriano Weyler employed a *reconcentrado* policy in an attempt to isolate Cuban rebels.<sup>50</sup> This form of population isolation caught significant press coverage in the United States, as thousands of deaths occurred due to disease and starvation in the detention camps.<sup>51</sup> US military leaders were well aware of these developments, and during the eve of the Philippine War, the label of “butcher” of civilians from General Weyler applied to commanders who oversaw population isolation in the Philippines.<sup>52</sup>

The British Army had used population isolation, without significant scrutiny, prior to the Boer War of 1899.<sup>53</sup> Starting in September 1900, the British established camps for civilians who decided to cooperate with the British Army.<sup>54</sup> Refugee camps increased over the next few years to concentration camps in which disease and death occurred at an alarming rate.<sup>55</sup> Concentration camp conditions in 1901 shocked the English public.<sup>56</sup> At the same time, Philippine

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<sup>49</sup> Aldridge, “civilize them,” 117-118, 141. As two examples: Bell joined Seventh Cavalry regiment in 1878 after George Custer’s defeat. Their field time handed down policies on how to deal with Native American conflict. General Otis fought with the Sioux in 1876.

<sup>50</sup> Stewart, *American Military History*, 342.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> May, *Battle for Batangas*, 243. A debate on Bell’s trials judged by history is written by May starting on page 243, with prominent historians weighing in for and against Bell’s actions. The title of butcher is used by Bell’s detractors.

<sup>53</sup> Aldridge, “civilize them,” 20. Upper Burma was the sight of one example of village relocations in 1885.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 24-25.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 24.

Commissioner William Taft witnessed population concentration in Marinduque, and wished to keep the experience quiet from the rest of the American public.<sup>57</sup> During the turn of the century, US military leaders looked to Europe in the study of military doctrine and techniques, and seeing an example of population isolation employed by the longest established, civilized, and dominant European power must have re-enforced the use of this technique as an acceptable option.

As shown through this brief review of historical usage, US military leaders considered population isolation as a viable technique. Many senior US military officers either heard about population isolation, experienced it first hand in the past, or saw the employment of population concentration as an acceptable military necessity employed by the United States and other European nations. Modern American military and political institutions would struggle to accept population isolation in the way envisioned during the Philippine War. However, civilian and military leaders during that conflict saw it as an option, and were willing to employ it for the achievement of national goals.

### **Population Isolation in the Philippines by the *Insurrectos***

Population isolationism was a technique occasionally used by US forces in the Philippines. It was not exclusive to the US military. *Insurrectos* practiced population isolation in Southeast Luzon. In the Bicolandia provinces, Major General Vito Belarmino, a supporter of Emilio Aguinaldo, led the *insurrectos*.<sup>58</sup> He ordered the local population to desert their homes during the US occupation of the Bicolandia (peninsular area of Southeast Luzon) coastal towns in January 1900.<sup>59</sup> Belarmino tasked the consolidated population to feed his troops that fought

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<sup>57</sup> Andrew Birtle, "The U.S. Army's Pacification of Marinduque, Philippine Islands, April 1900- April 1901." *The Journal of Military History* Volume 61, No. 2 (April 1997), 255.

<sup>58</sup> Linn, *Philippine War*, 180.

<sup>59</sup> Linn, *Army and Counterinsurgency*, 100.

against the Americans.<sup>60</sup> Belarmino's *insurrectos* terrorized pro-American or neutral citizens who stayed in the cities under US military control. Most of the rural population gathered into the heartland of the peninsula, on behalf of the *insurrectos*. However, logistically, Belarmino could not sustain this strategy, so more of the population returned to the cities. His method ultimately failed against the Americans, as the population returned to the cities and returned to pro-American areas.<sup>61</sup> This population isolation is noteworthy, but not devastating in the way that signified the most severe techniques implemented by the Americans in the Philippines.

On the island of Leyte, less than two miles removed from Samar, the *insurrectos* practiced population isolation. In 1900 there was a localized civil war raging in towns on Leyte as Filipino police forces fought against the *insurrectos*. Conflicts raged because the *insurrectos* attempted to burn the villages to prevent US force basing operations, and local inhabitants resisted the destruction of their property. The *insurrectos* attempted to encourage the regional population to desert the towns to deprive the Americans of any attempt of civilian governance. US forces used coercion and conciliation to attempt to bring the Filipinos back into the villages, while the *insurrectos* forced most of the town "into the hills to grow crops."<sup>62</sup> The leader of this *insurrecto* movement was Ambrosio Moxica (another Aguinaldo supporter).<sup>63</sup> He issued decrees that restricted Filipinos from living in occupied zones.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Linn, *Army and Counterinsurgency*, 95-118 described the complex process that Belarmino faced in concentrating his own population in an attempt to deprive the US invaders of their ability to control the local area.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 108-109. A discussion of techniques to bring the population back into the American controlled sectors show that lack of substance coupled with religious support and native appeals by secure citizens succeeded in drawing away from Belarmino's popular support.

<sup>62</sup> Linn, *Philippine War*, 237-238.

<sup>63</sup> Benjamin Beede, ed. *The War of 1898 and U.S. Interventions 1898-1934: An Encyclopedia*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994), 264.

<sup>64</sup> Linn, *Philippine War*, 239.

Before American attempts of pacification reached the heightened actions of population isolation, local leaders of the *insurrectos* were already attempting to concentrate their people as a tactical action to thwart US objectives. By the time US forces employed civilian concentration, some portions of the Filipino population were already familiar with this technique. Both warring parties isolated portions of the archipelago on more than one occasion.

The following map illustrates areas where US forces employed population isolation during the Philippine War. Not included are areas that the Filipinos used civilian concentration on their own people. In addition, the map does not show areas that were concentrated during times of civil unrest and attempts at insurgency after 1902.

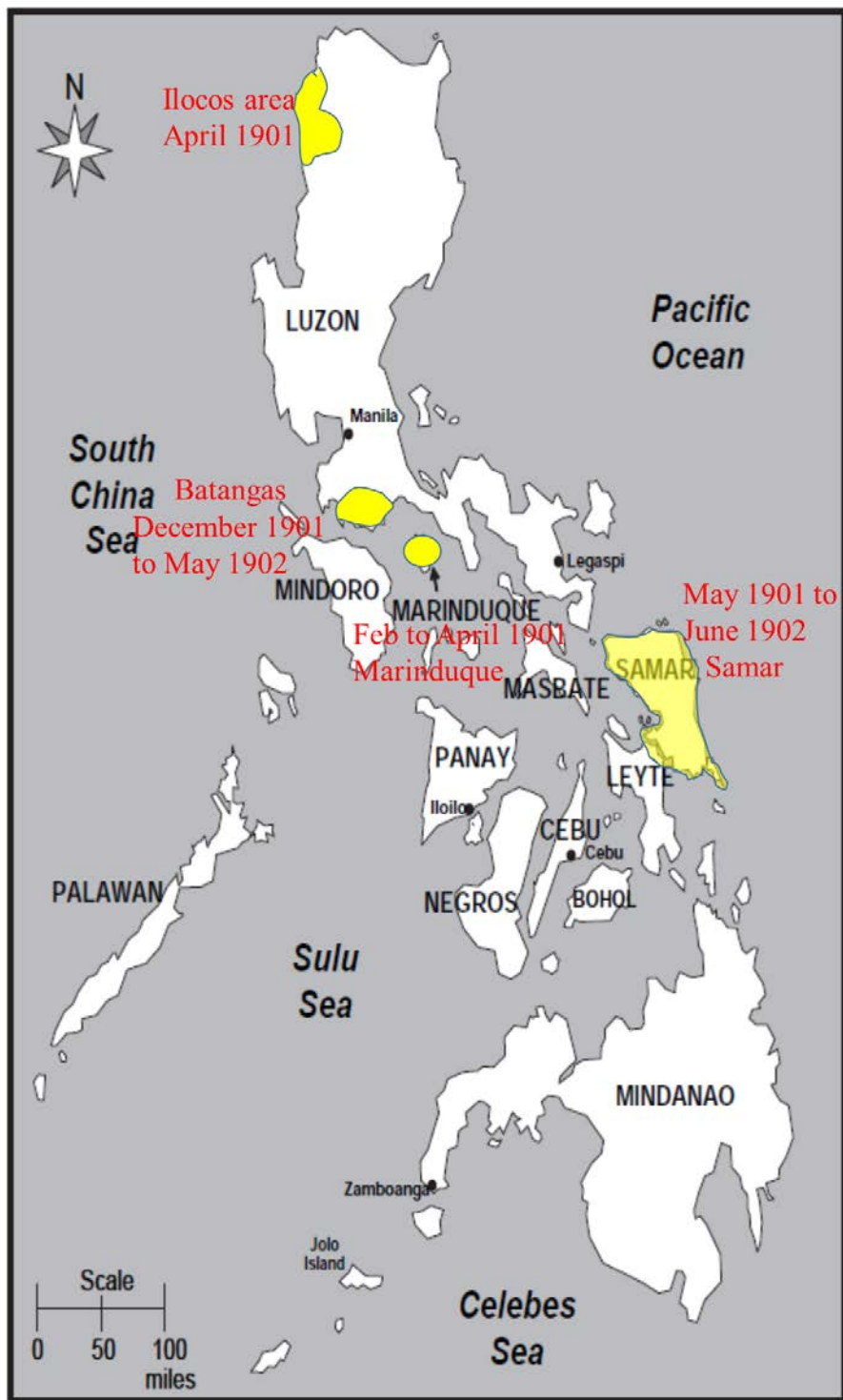


Figure 1: Philippine Islands with effected areas of population isolation employed by US forces.

Source: Ramsey, *Case Studies*, 3. Shading and red text was added by the author of this monograph.



As shown on the preceding page, four major islands exposed to population isolation existed in the Philippines. Luzon, Samar, Leyte, and Marinduque all have published accounts of incidents of concentration. A discussion of all of these areas, with a focus on the leaders, duration, and level of intensity will help aid in understanding the breadth of population isolation in the Philippines. Areas of concentration took place in a minority of the Philippine countryside, of which only slightly over half of the provinces actually had fighting that took place during the Philippine War. Thirty-four provinces in the Philippines avoided conflict with the Americans.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Arnold, *Jungle of Snakes*, 26.

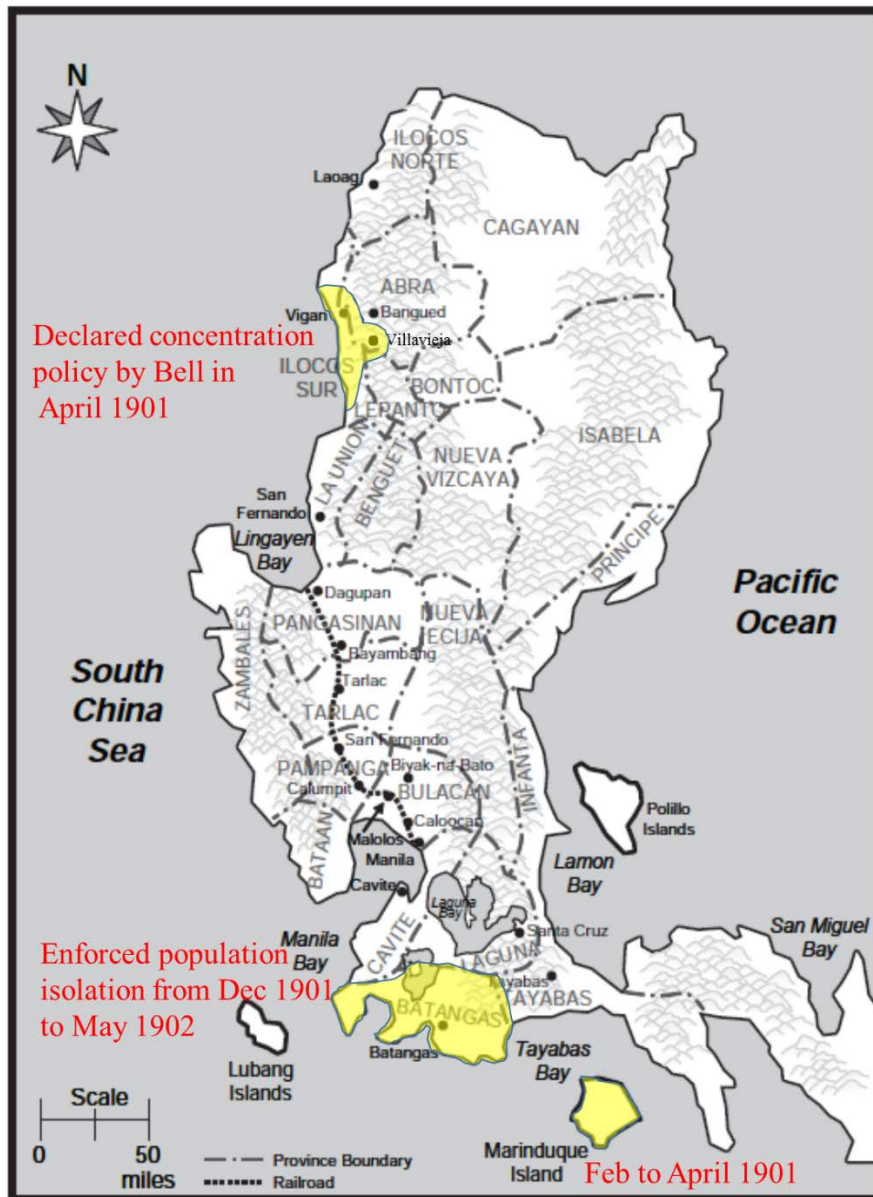


Figure 2: Luzon: Shaded areas showing population isolation zones employed by US forces.

Source: Ramsey, Case Studies, 15. Shading, red text, and location of Villavieja done by the author of this monograph.

Luzon, as the major island with the capital city, highest population, and most of the land mass of the Philippines, had a minority of its geographical area exposed to population isolation techniques. Specifically population concentration occurred in four different geographical locales. Both belligerent parties played a role in these four areas, which included the Ilocos region (1901), the Batangas area (1901-1902), the Bicolandia peninsula (by the *insurrectos*, 1900), and central

Luzon (1904-1906). The Ilocos region employed the earliest use of population isolation by the Americans during the Philippine War, with a small portion of the population involved. The Batangas area experienced widespread concentration camps and devastation during several months, towards the end of the Philippine War. The Bicolandia peninsula included some cases of population concentration by the *insurrecto* leader in the early stages of the conflict. Finally, central Luzon experienced some traces of population isolation during times that preceded the Philippine War. An explanation of the four areas will help to illustrate the breadth and depth of population isolationism in this key region of the Philippines. The Ilocos region and Batangas province ended guerilla warfare only after the employment of population isolation. Attempts at policies of attraction did not succeed in those regions.

A prominent leader who led the effort of the Americans on Luzon was J. Franklin Bell.<sup>66</sup> Bell's length of service in the Philippine War was three years long. He attained promotion from captain to brigadier general during his service in the Philippines. Considered one of the most able commanders in the Philippine War, he employed various processes to attain victory in the areas that he commanded.<sup>67</sup> He applied the mix of conventional warfare with civilian governance. Bell leveraged the elites and community leaders to govern their lands after he felt that they parted with the *insurrecto* forces. When Bell detected shadow governments, he issued orders of warning that cooperation with the *insurrectos* would bear a heavy burden upon the local population. Finally, when attempts to damage and curtail the livelihood of Filipinos did not result in an establishment of a pacified region, then he warned the population of concentration measures. His use of military forces and civilian cooperatives to enforce population concentration coincided with military efforts to root out the insurgents in the surrounding regions under Bell's control.

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<sup>66</sup> Arnold, *Jungle of Snakes*, 55-56. Bell was a prominent military leader in several wars and conflicts in US History, including service at a high level in World War I. He was also a trained lawyer, and paid close attention to General Orders No. 100.

<sup>67</sup> Linn, *Army and Counterinsurgency*, 59.

While Bell was successful at the employment of concentration techniques, he was not the first to suggest the measure. General Loyd Wheaton commanded the areas of Northern Luzon, and he engaged in correspondence on concentration measures with his subordinate, General S. B. M. Young. General Wheaton advocated “swift measures of destruction” to subdue the rebellion.<sup>68</sup> General Young advocated a full variety of options to subdue the people, including concentrating the population into zones under military control, while devastating guerrilla bases.<sup>69</sup> The arrival of Bell to Northern Luzon coincided with the debates of these senior officers that were discussing population isolation techniques.

The Department of Northern Luzon was in the northwestern part of the island of Luzon, which included the Ilocos area. The Spanish adequately governed portions of this region through the Catholic Church. However, agricultural regions of the Ilocos, especially towards the northern portions, opposed Spanish rule and resentments towards foreigners were the norm.

The conduct of the Philippine War in this area met with a defeat of the remnants of the *insurrecto* conventional units in December 1899.<sup>70</sup> A rather quick elimination of armed conventional resistance, followed with the false hope of US military forces of success in pacifying the region, did not succeed in peaceful American governance. Certain areas of the department were still under the strong influence of the Filipino elites that were fighting the Americans. *Insurrectos* established shadow governments, and resistance continued successfully for over a year. Casualties mounted towards the end of 1900 as the Americans suffered some regression in their attempts at pacification. Fortunately for the Americans, US forces were able to take advantage of an intelligence windfall.<sup>71</sup> This increased knowledge led to a system of using

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<sup>68</sup> John Gates, *Schoolbooks and Krags: The United States Army in the Philippines, 1898-1902* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press Inc., 1973), 189.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 190.

<sup>70</sup> Ramsey, *Case Studies*, 31, 33.

<sup>71</sup> Ramsey, *Case Studies*, 49-50. LT William Johnson interrogated an imprisoned leader (Crispulo Patajo) of a religious community that was at odds with the *insurrectos*. Working with

one religious group against the existing resistance organization, with ample success. However, the shadow government persisted due to the ties with the elites that the resistors had, and this led to the employment of population isolation practices in the Abra region.<sup>72</sup> The *insurrectos* in Abra were entrenched well compared to the rest of the department. The duration of these concentration areas was less than three weeks, and limited to a small region of the overall department of Northern Luzon. *Insurrecto* resistance quickly crumbled, and the resistors came to terms with the Americans as their popular and material support rapidly diminished due to sustenance deprivation.

In early 1901, after the Abra conflict and concentration measures had already started, Bell assumed command of the Ilocos region. He determined that the local population still did not feel protected. Upon ensuring civilian security, he successfully undermined the Filipino hostile forces. Bell's issuance of a general order called for population isolation at the threat of burning more villages worked. In April 1901, upon an extension of enforced civilian concentration, guerrilla leaders surrendered, and population isolation ended within days or weeks of the issuance of consolidating civilians into protected zones.<sup>73</sup> The capture of Aguinaldo and his rebuke of resistance to the Americans seemed to help determine the right time for the Filipino hostiles to give up their fight and incorporate back into local society dominated by US governance.

This area had the earliest documented exposure to population isolationism on Luzon by US forces, over the course of a few weeks in the latter part of 1900, and again the threat of concentration during April 1901. Officers under the command of Bell received highly detailed instructions prior to using population isolation in the department of Northern Luzon. Bell took the

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Patajo and his supporters, the Americans were able to develop firm understanding of the shadow government that existed in the Ilocos. Johnson created a report on this discovery, and the full US military structure in the Philippines benefitted from Johnson's findings.

<sup>72</sup> Linn, *Philippine War*, 262-263.

<sup>73</sup> Ramsey, *Case Studies*, 62.

previous successes of the first district and completed it with an issuance of a general order calling for population isolation on 12 April 1901.<sup>74</sup> Triumph of Bell's troops in using this technique to bring the rebellious Filipinos to cease hostilities most certainly emboldened him to re-enforce success in other future areas of the Philippines as he kept receiving promotions and transferred to positions of increased responsibility and larger geographical scope.

The Batangas region, with outlying areas of Cavite, Laguna, and Tayabas, had the most extensive exposure, with long lasting effects, of severe population isolation from December 1901 to the end of April of 1902. Bell transferred to this district after his successful completion of pacification in Ilocos. Leading up to this severe enacting of zones of protection, the model of the conduct of the Philippine War complied with some other areas of the Philippines. Filipino forces did not offer much substantial armed resistance, and consolidated in the countryside. From those operational bases they effectively influenced the shadow governments in the urban areas. Success did not occur with the co-opting of different cultural groups against the prevailing Tagalog ruling society. Noted atrocities occurred by both warring parties, and the civilian population was generally convinced to avoid helping the foreigners. American forces started taking harsh measures by burning villages, crops, and areas suspected of harboring the Filipino guerrillas. Areas where communications lines and supply channels were disturbed and attacked by guerrillas faced local retribution by US forces. Even though access to food and meeting basic needs often consumed more time by the guerrillas instead of fighting the Americans, resistance continued. It was in this current situation that Bell assumed command of the district, fresh off his successful pacification of Northern Luzon, which included the use of concentration.

Through well-written and thorough telegraphic circulars and general orders, Bell again instructed his command to employ population isolation as a useful measure of eradicating the

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<sup>74</sup> Ramsey, *Case Studies*, 61.

guerrilla forces.<sup>75</sup> Given a few weeks to consolidate, the civilians organized into numerous rural areas named protection zones. This time the zones of protection were in effect for numerous months, some extending on into the early summer months.<sup>76</sup> Three hundred thousand civilians mustered into these concentrated areas.<sup>77</sup> Meanwhile, numerous patrols traversed the countryside in an attempt to defeat *insurrecto* resistance. Initial success, followed by months of prolonged patrols and negotiations, led to an eventual end to anti-American resistance. After casualties that numbered hundreds of combatants, thousands of captured *insurrectos*, and thousands of civilian deaths in a few areas of poor camp conditions, population isolation ended. Almost all of the Filipino combatants had surrendered, with the last resistors surrendering in early May.<sup>78</sup>

As mentioned in the section of Filipino use of concentration, General Belarmino attempted to employ population isolation in southeastern Luzon, against his own people.<sup>79</sup> He was able to stay in the field, opposing US military forces for seventeen months.<sup>80</sup>

Finally, in central Luzon concentration techniques reappeared in 1904. *Ladrones* (generally categorized as bandits) effected central Luzon in a negative way, and pacification measures called for re-instating some zones of protection. This took place around Cavite, Laguna, Rizal, and Batangas Provinces. This time the zones of protection did not serve their purpose of keeping civilians safe from exterior forces, as another Filipino uprising reduced troop strength in the local area in order to defeat the Pulhan resistance in Samar and Leyte. The *Ladrones* took

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<sup>75</sup> Ramsey, *Counter guerrilla War*, 45.

<sup>76</sup> Ramsey *Case Studies*, 102.

<sup>77</sup> Gates, *Schoolbooks and Krags*, 261.

<sup>78</sup> Ramsey, *Case Studies*, 102-103. May, *Battle for Batangas*, 264-265.

<sup>79</sup> Linn, *Army and Counterinsurgency*, 101.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 95-118.

over the local police and looted, kidnapped, and occasionally murdered inhabitants in the zones of protection.<sup>81</sup>

Besides central Luzon, the military and political aims of population isolation attained success in the areas controlled by both belligerents. Belarmino imposed limited suffering upon his people during population isolation. Belarmino's efforts actually frustrated and delayed the ability of the US military in their goal of effectively governing the peninsular region. US forces considered that area as a stalemate for quite a while, until the locals distanced themselves from the ineffectiveness of Belarmino's ability to sustain the political, economic, and military fight against the Americans.

The Americans avoided inflicting massive civilian suffering in the Ilocos district. The substantial threat of civilian concentration, with the beginning of enforcement of consolidation in the Ilocos region ended resistance. Contributing factors were other political events like the capture of Aguinaldo. In Batangas the Filipino guerrillas lost their will to fight, and surrendered to the Americans due to population isolation.<sup>82</sup> The accomplished purpose of breaking up the shadow government that was a threat to Filipinos (elites and peasants) and US military succeeded in both the Ilocos and Batangas regions. The Filipino guerrillas and resisters, who remained to retake their positions during the post war conflict as the land holding elite, agreed that the harsh pacification techniques in Ilocos and Batangas ended the conflict sooner.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Linn, *Guardians of Empire*, 29.

<sup>82</sup> Arnold, *Jungle of Snakes*, 62; Reynaldo C. Ileto, "The Philippine-American War: Friendship and Forgetting" in Angel Velasco Shaw and Luis H. Francia, eds., *Vestiges of War: The Philippine-American War and the Aftermath of an Imperial Dream 1899-1999* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 17, 18. Arnold explains this loss of will to fight. Ileto shows three viewpoints of Filipinos who gave up due to the hardships that were partial or fully attributed to zones of protection.

<sup>83</sup> Reynaldo C. Ileto, "The Philippine-American War: Friendship and Forgetting" in Angel Velasco Shaw and Luis H. Francia, eds., *Vestiges of War: The Philippine-American War and the Aftermath of an Imperial Dream 1899-1999* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 17, 18.



Substantial civilian suffering and death in the Philippines occurred during the Philippine War when population isolation existed, and the Luzon area completely re-enforces that observation. However, concentration, planned quickly and conducted on a small scale in some areas, did not yield civilian catastrophe, like in the Ilocos region, where the deaths did not seem to result from civilians suffering in zones of protection. Belarmino's actions of consolidating his fellow Filipinos remain underreported in the context of immense local suffering. In the Batangas region, the amount of suffering was greatest, with immediate effects continuing through July and August 1902.<sup>84</sup> Even though it is hard to judge how the deaths occurred, estimates of thousands to well over ten thousand seem plausible.<sup>85</sup> Some of these deaths may have occurred due to the unfavorable cholera and malaria outbreaks, and victims would have certainly succumbed to those diseases in normal living areas. Yet lack of quality food, overcrowded conditions, and the stressful environment undoubtedly raised the death toll from those epidemics that were spreading through Asia at the time.<sup>86</sup> Bell attempted to mitigate the suffering of civilians.<sup>87</sup> Events did not work out in his favor, and this area, along with Samar, got the most undeserved negative press due to the immense amount of civilian suffering.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> May, *Battle for Batangas*, 274, 283-284.

<sup>85</sup> Arnold, *Jungle of Snakes*, 63.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>87</sup> Ramsey, *Counter guerrilla Warfare*, 55-58, 62-63. Circulars seven, ten, and seventeen are good accounts of many examples of attempting to relieve civilian suffering through ration control.

<sup>88</sup> Arnold, *Jungle of Snakes*, 64.



Figure 3: Samar and Leyte: Approximate areas effected by population isolation.

*Source:* Ramsey, Case Studies, 14. Red text, the towns of Calbayog and Guiuan, and shading done by the author of this monograph.

Samar's experience with population isolation was not comparable to the other portions of the archipelago during the Philippine War. US military resources did not exist in Samar and Leyte to pacify the area until 1901. Until that time, there was a stalemate with violent episodes. Both belligerents used civilian concentration in small doses during 1899 and 1900. Island wide civilian concentration materialized in 1901 on Samar, with increased US military presence and pronounced violent conflict. Mostly judged as an overly harsh procedure, population isolation did result in the capitulation of resistance to the US military. This action, in conjunction with the Batangas concentration methods, ended the major portions of organized resistance against American rule of the Philippines.

In 1900, the large island of Samar was facing food shortages due to drought, war between the Americans and the *insurrectos*, and a US Naval blockade. The main export from Samar was hemp, and in early 1900, US forces attempted to secure ports and encourage the population to accept American goals and resume trade.<sup>89</sup> Pacification efforts did not significantly convince the

<sup>89</sup> Linn, *Philippine War*, 232.

population of nearly three hundred thousand Samarenos to abandon their *insurrecto* leaders.

There was some tactical success of US forces in attracting the regional population to their cause of pacification. Local populations did accept the US forces, and a few local Samareno police forces formed to assist in pacification efforts.<sup>90</sup> Upon their completion of recruitment, these police forces transferred to Leyte.

The *insurrectos* continued to be a strong force throughout all of 1900. While facing food shortages, the resistors attempted to establish farms and supply caches in the rough jungle interior. They targeted US patrols when they could, and after a few costly encounters of attempts at conventional warfare, the *insurrectos* changed their tactics. Using guerrilla warfare, they attempted to harass and kill Americans on their terms using the terrain, deception, and massive amounts of Filipino bolomen. An early success for the *insurrectos* occurred in April of 1900 when soldiers in the army garrison at Catubig lost half of their men.<sup>91</sup> Potentially six hundred bolomen attacked the thirty-one US soldiers in this American defeat. US forces retaliated by burning Catubig, and subsequent patrols destroyed food supplies and villages. US policy focused on Luzon in 1900, and there were no attempts at direct control of the whole island of Samar during that year. The remainder of 1900 was a relative standstill, with a few garrisons and ports occupied by the Americans, and the majority of the interior of Samar controlled by the *insurrectos*, or not effected by US rule.

On the neighboring island of Leyte, the population of 270,000 faced five US infantry companies in 1900. The US Commander on Leyte drove to destroy the *insurrectos*, and his ambitious plan led to 125 engagements in five months.<sup>92</sup> He was able to convince his commander

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<sup>90</sup> Donald Chaput, "Founding of the Leyte Scouts" *Leyte-Samar Studies* 9, no. 2, (September 1975): 5-6, 8-9.

<sup>91</sup> Jerry Keenan, *Encyclopedia of the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2001), 342.

<sup>92</sup> Linn, *Philippine War*, 235.

to draw US troops and Samareno police forces away from Samar to aid in pacifying Leyte. Several one-sided battles occurred in which the US forces severely damaged the *insurrecto* infrastructure on Leyte. In addition, efforts to open schools, hold elections, and provide other social services paid huge dividends. In areas that wanted US forces, a pre-condition was for the clearing of *insurrectos* by the local population. Local disagreement between the *insurrectos* and villagers would sometimes incite Filipino conflict, and the US military established pro-American police forces throughout the island, in return for US economic support and protection from the *insurrectos*. The formation of the pro-American Leyte scouts helped increase US strength on Leyte.<sup>93</sup>

Some civilians endured two resettlement periods on Leyte. In order to avoid American influence, the *insurrectos* convinced the civilians to leave the villages and towns and establish farms in the interior. Eventually segments of the population faced starvation due to poor conditions in the interior. As food became scarce, the Americans enticed the civilians back into protected zones while continuing to bring the fight to the *insurrecto* bases on Leyte. Locals fell under American led civilian administration, and resistance continued to weaken through the end of 1900. These areas of concentration were not severe in death tolls towards civilians, as local rule against the *insurrectos* largely seemed to avoid massive civil deprivation and discord. *Insurrectos* continued to surrender in growing amounts through the end of 1900, and by May 1901 the key *insurrecto* leader on Leyte surrendered.<sup>94</sup>

While dealing with food shortage continued, the conditions on Samar worsened in 1901.<sup>95</sup> In May 1901, Major General Arthur MacArthur was the commander of all land forces in the Philippines. Pacification was working throughout most of the archipelago, and it was time for

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<sup>93</sup> Chaput, "Leyte Scouts," 6, 8-9.

<sup>94</sup> Linn, *Philippine War*, 237-240.

<sup>95</sup> Thomas Bruno, "The Violent End of Insurgency on Samar, 1901-1902" *Army History* 79 (Spring 2011): 34-35.

MacArthur to focus stronger efforts to bring Samar under US control. By June a Navy blockade of Samar controlled trade, with the seizure of civilian boats by US forces. Supply camps were established, and crop destruction occurred when populations did not cooperate with the Americans. Segments of the population moved to US administered cities along the coasts.<sup>96</sup> Population isolation policies inadequately implemented encouraged *insurrecto* support to continue among the Filipinos who migrated back to the port cities.

The island went through continued hardship in June 1901 as both sides of the conflict attempted to control the population. Upon the resumption of aggressive intervention, the Americans could move throughout Samar due to their increased military advantages through Army strength and prioritized Navy resources. During the summer and fall of 1901 there was an uneasy balance of the warring parties in which small but bloody skirmishes occurred throughout the island when US forces left their bases without adequate numbers, and occasional acts against those supportive of the American cause occurred in the US military controlled coastal enclaves.<sup>97</sup>

Prior to population isolation on Samar in 1901, Samar's Filipino *insurrectos* harassed pro-American Filipinos and US military garrison troops. Retaliation occurred in typical search and destroy parties, with some success. A major event that made retaliation harsher was the interference of Filipinos in Samar with the population in the nearby island of Leyte. The Filipino resistors in Samar threatened the balance of a mostly pacified Leyte. In Samar, shadow governments, civilian casualties, and atrocities by both military forces led to an escalation of conflict.<sup>98</sup> What changed the guerrilla warfare success of the *insurrectos* was the Balangiga

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<sup>96</sup> Linn, *Philippine War*, 309.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 234.

<sup>98</sup> Kenneth Young, "Guerrilla Warfare: Balangiga Revisted" *Leyte-Samar Studies* 11, no. 1. (February 1977): 21-28. Young's article is one of many works that touch upon atrocities on all sides during the Philippine War, and his conclusion on page 28 summarizes Samar and all of the Philippines and the violent and unlawful interaction of belligerents during Guerilla warfare against each other and against civilians.

Massacre in September of 1901.<sup>99</sup> An immediate and bloody response of retribution came the next day, and the United States press touted this act as a “Philippine version of Custer’s Last Stand.”<sup>100</sup> Major General Adna R. Chaffee authorized further extreme measures in order to retaliate for the killing of forty-eight soldiers in a well-planned urban ambush.<sup>101</sup>

The Balangiga massacre led to the posting of Brigadier General Jacob Smith to the Samar area. Unlike forty-five year old General Bell, who promoted quickly and led as a top performer, Smith was a sixty-one year old who had seen action in the Civil War. Smith had the support of MacArthur as a Civil War vet and the admiration of Taft as a competent civil administrator who was willing to enforce peace with harsh measures.<sup>102</sup>

With the full support of his military and civilian leadership, Smith issued orders to pacify Samar. Unlike Bell, Smith arrived after the start of population isolation. His continuation of an existing campaign “was poorly planned and faulty in its execution.”<sup>103</sup> His apparent instructions to his subordinates included incendiary language like shooting anyone over twelve years of age, and making Samar “a howling wilderness.”<sup>104</sup> His policies involved starvation and destruction until all of the Filipinos showed that they were supportive of US control. At the same time, like his predecessors, Smith did not make a concerted effort to remove the population from the *insurrectos*, and a negative consequence of his harsh policy involved suspension of trade with

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<sup>99</sup> Donald Chaput, “The American Press and General Vicente Lukban, Hero of Samar” *Leyte-Samar Studies* 8, no. 1, (February 1974):21-28. A further analysis of Balangiga, Samar, Lukban, and some of his subordinates and their effects on conflict in Samar is discussed. Also, see Gates, 248.

<sup>100</sup> Arnold, *Jungle of Snakes*, 52-53.

<sup>101</sup> Linn, *Philippine War*, 219.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 312.

<sup>103</sup> Gates, *Schoolbooks and Krags*, 254.

<sup>104</sup> Gregg Jones, *Honor in the Dust: Theodore Roosevelt, War in the Philippines, and the Rise and Fall of America’s Imperial Dream* (New York: New American Library, 2012), 246.

Leyte, and a disruption of the US led civilian government on that island that was previously functioning peacefully.<sup>105</sup>

History judges Smith harshly, and with good reason, as his bombastic comments received widespread publication through the press and military court-martial proceedings. However, one recent alternative view characterized Smith as a scapegoat.<sup>106</sup> The 2011 publication reinforces the case that civilian concentration was already started prior to Smith's arrival at Samar.<sup>107</sup> Intense pressure by Smith's multiple superiors to pacify Samar "may have further bolstered the new brigade commander's aggressive nature."<sup>108</sup> In the face of public outcry of atrocities on Samar, and militarily embarrassing court-martial proceedings of US Marine Corps Major Waller, Smith found himself forced out of his position and into a court-martial.<sup>109</sup> Yet Smith still had support of his colleagues. Chaffee supported Smith's handling of the challenging situation on Samar in January 1902, and Smith's softening of harsh pacification measures followed in February 1902.<sup>110</sup> After court-martial proceeding that showed leniency, President Roosevelt felt compelled to retire Smith.<sup>111</sup> Despite these actions, Smith's popularity after retirement continued through supportive newspaper articles and journals written by military officers.<sup>112</sup> The view of Smith as a bombastic personality is relevant. Also significant is the time of his command in which massive atrocities during guerrilla war raised emotions to such heights that some level of military restraint was lost

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<sup>105</sup> Gates, *Schoolbooks and Kraggs*, 255.

<sup>106</sup> Bruno, "Insurgency on Samar," 43-44.

<sup>107</sup> Linn, *Philippine War*, 309.

<sup>108</sup> Bruno, "Insurgency on Samar," 36-37.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 42-43.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 43-44.

through multiple echelons of command. Smith's timing as commander of the brigade in Samar could not have been worse.

General Vicente Lukban led the resistance to US domination of Samar.<sup>113</sup> The insurgent network was strong, and Samar's resources were able to supply the *insurrectos* with sufficient supplies in their inland strongholds. Eventually, US soldiers on patrols and Filipino informants drastically reduced Lukban's forces. Starvation and constant movement wore the *insurrectos* out. Yet they were able to resist surrender due to the porous attempts of widespread control initiated on the island in 1901. With the support of some Filipinos that were suffering harshly from Smith's policies, the *insurrectos* were still a resisting force through the end of 1901.<sup>114</sup>

Smith's poor guidance and supervision attracted his command's attention. Smith found himself under investigation by his commander, Chaffee, and told to release his hold on Leyte.<sup>115</sup> Under guidance from Chaffee, Smith altered his operational approach in 1902. The new approach focused on social and economic tenets: providing for civilians and relaxing restrictions on trade.<sup>116</sup> In fact, Smith's orders were exact copies of Bell's instructions given out in Batangas two months earlier.<sup>117</sup> US forces continued to form concentration zones, and over a several months, the resistance in Samar capitulated due to Smith's ability to protect the population and destroy the rest of the island. This essentially starved the guerrillas and forced their surrender, which finally ended "hard war" practices that had a prominent duration of over two years of time.

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<sup>113</sup> Donald Chaput, "Leyte Leadership in the Revolution: The Moxica-Lukban Issues" *Leyte-Samar Studies* 9, no. 1, (February 1975): 3-11. This article describes the different leadership approaches of Moxica and Lukban, and clearly makes the case that Lukban was the prime leader on Samar and possibly an equal leader to Moxica on Leyte.

<sup>114</sup> Gates, *Schoolbooks and Krags*, 256.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 255.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 256.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*



Effected by actions on Samar, Leyte had to reinstitute military pacification. Previous success at pacification with community outreach and a smart effort to recover civilian control made the population more willing to follow US led civilian rule. Actions in Samar only moderately damaged Leyte.<sup>118</sup> Strong leadership with a positive record of local success on Leyte helped ensure that Samar's destruction was largely contained.

Population isolation in Samar was not well coordinated from the start, and led to unnecessary hardship. With the exception of Thomas Bruno's research, there are no significant historical attempts to validate Smith's techniques as anything other than deserving of a court-martial. Smith and some of his troops took part in atrocities, poor military planning, and poor joint co-operation in the first portion of the destruction of Samar. Judged from today's standards these offenses are worthy of court-martial proceedings, and even during 1902 actions on Samar did force several military officers into court-martial, retirement, and trial for war crimes.<sup>119</sup> As a result, the island of Samar suffered greatly from the actions of these irresponsible officers. However, this conventional view of Samar is over-exaggerated. There were actions of the majority of military leaders in the US forces who enforced moderation.<sup>120</sup> Otherwise, Samar would have sunk into "a complete reign of terror."<sup>121</sup> This total war environment featuring population isolation went from May 1901 to June 1902.

Concentration of civilians on Samar eventually worked. Military resistance crumbled, and political rule by locals overseen through the US structure resumed in 1902. *Insurrectos* no longer had the means to continue. A US patrol captured Lukban in February 1902, and Lukban

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<sup>118</sup> Gates, *Schoolbooks and Krags*, 255.

<sup>119</sup> Linn, *Army and Counterinsurgency*, 27.

<sup>120</sup> Gates, *Schoolbooks and Krags*, 255.

<sup>121</sup> Arnold, *Jungle of Snakes*, 54. Arnold describes the JAG investigation.

successfully urged his replacement to surrender in April 1902.<sup>122</sup> Other indicators of the delayed process of population isolation on Samar are a lack of continuity in command and possibly poor commander's intent. Unlike Batangas, Samar was a massive effort of civilian concentration without a developed plan from start to finish, and the changing of the responsible commander in the midst of the process certainly effected this lack of continuity. Despite bad press, a lengthy pacification process, and discord in Congress, the US military accomplished the pacification of Samar through population isolation.

### **Marinduque**

US forces employed population isolation throughout the island of Marinduque from February to April 1901. Portions of civilian concentration started in June of 1900, with American military occupation that resulted from conflicts with the *insurrectos*. An embarrassing defeat of Americans brought attention to Marinduque prior to the presidential elections of 1900. Retaliation against the *insurrectos* after that publicized defeat did not immediately develop into full-scale population isolation. It took direct orders, an ambitious desire by leaders, and the continued lack of success of the attraction policy that led to elevated civilian concentration measures that dominated the island's landscape from February to April 1901.

The island of Marinduque is the thirteenth largest island in the Philippine area, with an approximate population of fifty thousand civilians who were of Tagalog descent, and strong supporters of Aguinaldo's administration.<sup>123</sup> In April 1900 the arrival of US troops had the purpose of preventing the Filipino resistance a valuable economic and agricultural resource and haven, right off the main island of Luzon. At first, avoidance was the key against the Americans. Very few battles between US soldiers and *insurrectos* took place, and the continuity of American

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<sup>122</sup> Bruno, "Insurgency on Samar," 42.

<sup>123</sup> Birtle, "Marinduque," 255-256.

military superiority continued. However, town populations decreased as the civilians headed to the interior in order to avoid American administration. As a side theater to the Philippine War, US soldier levels reduced to two companies.<sup>124</sup> A lack of patrolling and effort effected these isolated companies and inhibited their understanding of the resistance on Marinduque.<sup>125</sup>

At the end of July, a defeat of an American patrol and subsequent burning of a part of the town of Boac showed the strength of the anti-American forces. This action, near the US Army garrison, led to a desire for the island's commander to bring the fight to the *insurrectos*. After some success, Captain Shields and his soldiers continued patrols that pushed into the interior, in the hopes of capturing the Filipino leaders. However, another more substantial defeat resulted after Captain Shields and his patrol took casualties in an ambush. Four Americans died, and fifty captured in mid-September 1900. The remaining garrisons on Marinduque received pressure, and it took over a week for re-enforcements from Manila to arrive and relieve the beleaguered US military troops.<sup>126</sup>

The commander of the re-enforcements from Manila attempted to find the prisoners, and he gained the impression that the population of all of Marinduque was working against the Americans.<sup>127</sup> This prompted General MacArthur to issue harsh orders to compel the island to surrender to American governance, targeting the male population as complacent in their support of the *insurrectos*.<sup>128</sup> He ordered all men over fifteen years of age to imprisonment until hostilities ended and American prisoners returned.<sup>129</sup> Mainly the soldiers found abandoned *barrios* and

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<sup>124</sup> Birtle, "Marinduque," 260.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 261-262.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 262-263.

<sup>128</sup> Linn, *Philippine War*, 213.

<sup>129</sup> Birtle, "Marinduque," 263.

towns, with only the results of emplacing six hundred prisoners onto a small island. After over three weeks, with lax guard procedures, these civilians found their way back to shore and out of captivity. After the release of the US prisoners, pressure by US forces failed to stamp out the rebellion.

Ambitious American commanders took charge in the winter months of 1900, and the increased destruction of the countryside compelled the rapid growth of the coastal towns. Civilians deprived of their livelihood flocked to the coastal towns.<sup>130</sup> Encouraged by higher commands and the action of his predecessor (Lieutenant Colonel A.W. Corliss, a Civil War and Indian War veteran), Major Frederick Smith instituted population concentration in February 1901.<sup>131</sup> Six major concentration zones (coastal towns) were the only population areas preserved from destruction by the United States military forces.<sup>132</sup> Resistance lessened during the winter of 1900, and population isolation, coupled with island devastation and constant patrolling, compelled the eventual surrender of leaders and units of the *insurrectos* during the end of April, 1901.<sup>133</sup>

This was the first incident of significant and sustained population isolation employed during the Philippine War against a substantial population of fifty thousand civilians. Being so close to Luzon and Manila, Marinduque concluded a pacification experiment that probably made other US leaders notice its effectiveness during the middle years of the Philippine War.<sup>134</sup> Even Philippine Commissioner William Taft visited the island during March of 1901 with employment

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<sup>130</sup> Linn, *Philippine War*, 214.

<sup>131</sup> Birtle, "Marinduque," 271.

<sup>132</sup> Bruno, "Insurgency on Samar," 34.

<sup>133</sup> Birtle, "Marinduque," 275.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 280.

of population isolation in full effect.<sup>135</sup> He approved of this measure, and the policy of concentration was re-enforced in his mind as a worthy tool for population control.<sup>136</sup>

The results of population concentration on Marinduque are difficult to measure today. Recorded were significant livestock losses and the agricultural change of the island, resulting in Marinduque becoming a rice importer compared to the previous year of exporting rice as a cash crop. Deaths are not prevalent on record in the protection zones, but several thousand deaths to the inhabitants occurred during 1901 to 1903 due to disease. As elsewhere, the carabao population was massively devastated due to rinderpest in 1902. Like the actions on Luzon and Samar, it is hard to draw a direct correlation to population concentration and direct devastation in the postbellum years, but the similarities of the situation seem to indicate that stresses on the environment and people by concentration methods led to an additional source of devastation to the island of Marinduque.<sup>137</sup>

### Conclusion

What this case study failed to do is analyze specific protection zones throughout the archipelago. The Senate hearings give a few points of view based on personal letters read by senators and by testimony given by Colonel Wagner. He observed two concentration zones in Batangas in 1902. Those views of individual letters and officer testimony are very limited to a few locations. In addition, source material is lacking on details. Twenty years of material from the *Leyte-Samar Studies* magazines do not describe the concentration zones in detail, and American authors often refer back to the scant details that exist in the Senate hearings. The range of descriptions of the concentration zones describe organized areas in which civilian families

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<sup>135</sup> Linn, *Philippine War*, 279.

<sup>136</sup> Birtle, "Marinduque", 273, 280.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 278-280.

brought in all of their valuables and build a home away from home for the duration. The other end of the spectrum described secluded areas filled with death and suffering due to disease and civilians shot indiscriminately or killed while attempting to traverse the dead line and escape the concentration camp. Some of these zones of protection seemed protected directly by US soldiers who guarded the perimeters, and other civilian camps defended themselves with a loose assortment of pro-American civilians who checked identification, controlled entry and exit out of the zones, and contacted the US military authorities when breaches of security occurred. Efforts by future researchers may uncover more details of the physical descriptions of the concentration zones.

Vigorously supported by the political and military leaders, concentration of civilians ended the widespread insurgency. Population isolation was an acceptable mode of warfare. It is reasonable to understand the context that drove civilian leaders like William H. Taft and military leaders to use this technique as a way to attain the strategic objective of pacification of the Luzon area.<sup>138</sup> The formation of the Batangas establishment of zones of protection seemed to be the start of a massive toll in non-combatant human lives and suffering in the Philippines. Built on previous success, Bell did not anticipate a lengthy need for zones of protection. He unsuccessfully anticipated the shortfalls in importing adequate and quality food, along with inevitable failures in hygienic procedures by diverse groups. Americans still accomplished the military goal of defeating the insurgency, along with the political goal of creating local civilian administrations that were subordinate to US political and military objectives.

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<sup>138</sup> Hearings before the Committee on the Philippines of the United State Senate, 57<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1st sess., April 10, 1902. Doc. No. 331, pt. 1, 411-412. Taft's answer to the Senate Committee displays his support for the conduct of the Philippine War. The question was "if a safe and honorable method for withdrawal from the Philippines could be devised." He replied no. Taft went on to state: "when the facts become known, as they will be known within a decade... history will show, and when I say history I mean the accepted judgment of the people after ten years, that the course we are now pursuing is the only course possible."

The intricate balance of attaining lawful advantage over the enemy through harsh pacification measures, with the risk towards civilian devastation, highlights the importance of the Philippine War. US military leaders were not quick to apply concentration, as they understood the risks associated with relocation of major population areas. The difficult balance that military and political leaders faced during the Philippine War should provoke study and analysis by any collegiate class or military institution that wishes to understand all views of population control during times of war. To ignore the tens of thousands of civilian casualties, coupled with the strategic victory gained by this action of the US military and US government, would be a great shortcoming to understanding United States, Filipino, and Asian history.

Taking an enhanced understanding of the overall results of population isolation during the Philippine War offers significant reflection for all leaders. Leaders must fully understand the possible results of harsh measures taken, even if those measures exist in order to achieve the successful end-state. Finally, Bell assumed that his pacification strategy would yield similar results between Ilocos and Batangas. His assumption was correct, but he probably did not visualize how his actions would yield different population consequences in relation to the time needed to suppress the *insurrectos* and the amount of suffering, deaths, and environmental damage. Bullard's observations on the wide spectrum of the pacification paradox between active domination and passive submission sum up the challenges faced by population isolation throughout history.

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